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Review of *Nietzsche on Knowledge and Wisdom* by Keith May

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Each provides a general overview of the contents and argument of the text and also singles out one or two short, interesting sections (e.g., the master and slave section of the *Phenomenology* and the Being/Nothing/Becoming triad from the *Science of Logic*) for more detailed commentary. This is a happy solution to the vexing problem of how to give beginners some sense of both the systematic scope and concrete riches of Hegel's texts. Besides the *Phenomenology*, *Science of Logic*, *Encyclopedia*, and *Philosophy of Right*, Rockmore also discusses in some detail the *Differenzschrift*, which is justified by his historical and thematic focus. However, the decision to ignore Hegel's posthumously edited and published lectures on art, religion, the history of philosophy, and the philosophy of history, given their profound later influence, is less understandable in a work that tries to take account of the historical influence of Hegelianism. Rockmore provides a fine treatment of the problematic "necessity" of the movement from one "shape of consciousness" to the next in the *Phenomenology*—a process that he helpfully compares to the historical development from one scientific theory to the next—and a clear-headed discussion of what "absolute knowledge" is—and is not—for Hegel.

The brief chapter on the reception of and reactions to Hegelianism over the past century and a half is largely successful. Rockmore's discussion of Kierkegaard and Marx are models of concision and good sense and clearly demonstrate his more general claim concerning the pervasive influence of Hegel. On the other hand, it is hard to see why Nietzsche is included in this chapter, and Rockmore's attempt to link Nietzsche's rejection of the entire Western (Platonic) philosophical tradition to a rejection of Hegel is unconvincing.

Inevitably, scholars will quarrel with specific points of Rockmore's interpretation and will challenge claims made in passing (and, given the brevity of this work, almost all of the claims have to be made simply *en passant*). In its main lines, however, this work fully succeeds in accomplishing the difficult and unique task it sets for itself. Its broadly "historical" approach to the problem of introducing readers to Hegel's thought is very much in "the spirit of Hegel" and is, I believe, preferable to other introductory strategies. There is no other book quite like this in English, and for this reason alone *Before and after Hegel* can be recommended to anyone seeking entrance into what so often seems to be the self-enclosed and impenetrable Hegelian fortress.

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Keith M. May. *Nietzsche on the Struggle between Knowledge and Wisdom*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993. Pp. xv + 193. Cloth, \$49.95.

This unusual and thoughtful study, which is more a sustained Nietzschean meditation than a piece of scholarship about Nietzsche, is inspired by an 1875 note referring to "the struggle between science and wisdom displayed in ancient Greek philosophy." As a classical philologist Nietzsche concluded that in the ancients wisdom once essentially pitted itself *against* knowledge. As a philosopher he argued that wisdom—personal, incomplete, perspectival, perhaps idiosyncratic—ought once again to challenge knowl-

edge (*Wissenschaft*, the stuff of academia). May identifies with Nietzsche's post-Kantian redefinition of the task of thinking as the resolute interpretation of being. He also identifies with the ancients', particularly the Presocratics', impulse to know and measure the value of soul or psyche. He argues, eruditely and succinctly, to the militantly Nietzschean conclusion that wisdom or strength of soul surpasses knowledge in value, and tragedy and virtue as well.

May brings to this conclusion the fervid belief in individuality that characterizes the creative artist, the one who crafts the *aletheic* Word where image and meaning embrace. This is the nineteenth-century cult of genius again, plausible still, I suppose, for one like May who comes to Nietzsche and to argumentative philosophy from the literary domain. Yet his analysis of ancient literatures and philosophies is so clear and compelling, his taste for the central argument in a writer so accurate, that one readily takes May as a philosopher, i.e., as one who speaks in the social domain of public "truths" or of hypotheses that pass as tested and warranted. When he finally claims as his own the thesis of the utterly individual nature of truth and meaning, he seems to advance a notion of truth so private and one of authority so elitist that they seem obnoxious. He is speaking in the voice of the Promethean artist, however, and assumes the unique authority of Heideggerean poet, the culture-founding primal speaker: My (personal) vision is truer, more steadfast than your (hopelessly plural) sciences and disciplines.

May's argument for this view is well-crafted. If, in the tradition that goes from Kant's phenomenalism to Nietzsche's perspectivism to the aestheticism of the later Heidegger, there is no privileged moment where knowledge overlays reality, then knowledge, say as the assemblage of academic domains of discourse, is but a social creation, and objectivity disappears. If one stops here and privileges scepticism, the weak nihilism ensues which Nietzsche correctly diagnosed as the spiritual malady of late modernity. From the perspective of will to power, however, public knowledge can still be "true" as an instrument, a tool used by the "strong soul" possessed of personal wisdom. What is this use? As obstacle or challenge, it is the object of Socratic logical skirmish. What is this controlling wisdom? "The quality is personal, or preferably, *singular* and consists in the persistent exploration of one path. For example, Parmenides guides himself by a sort of negative image of the Way of Truth, an understanding that culture is by definition truthless" (175). May's touchstone, oxymoronic to my mind, is *personal truth*. It smacks more of Heidegger than of Nietzsche, but it is Heidegger in plain English.

This book is composed from diverse essays, some better than others. "Knowledge and Wisdom in the Tragic Age" explains Nietzsche's advance to the metaphysics of will to power as a personal appropriation of the legislative (rather than argued) insights of the Presocratics. From Anaximander he takes the view that the universe is ceaselessly undergoing alteration, from Heraclitus, the view that the universe is a "monster of energy." Nietzsche's metaphysics is Parmenidean in that it insists that nothing is imperfect, since every passing shape is fettered to the whole. He could be said to follow Anaxagoras in that will to power universally imputes purposiveness or nonmechanical meaning to each constellation. Nietzsche's "wisdom" is as personal, selective, or stylistic, argues May, as that of his sources.

May's essay on Socrates is similarly compelling. On the one hand, Socrates is pictured as pursuing thought for its own sake, not the conclusions at which it arrives. On the other hand, and more importantly, he urges restraint of the drive for knowledge, acknowledging the limitations of its origin in social authority. Under Socratic scrutiny, the social myth of "expertise" is unmasked as the rule of convention, sanctioned by merely local criteria and definitions. May's Socrates, whose wisdom rules his thirst for knowledge, is more a Heideggerean hero than the "monster of reason" celebrated and denounced in *Twilight of the Idols*.

May's chapter on Aristotle and Nietzsche is disappointing, working from the single point of the externality of Aristotle's first mover to what is moved. His interpretation of "Ariadne's Complaint," one of the *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*, is haunting and evocative. Ariadne, the modern soul, trembles with anxiety over the thought of a huntsman-god who has targeted her. The god, says May, is our belongingness to nature; Ariadne's anxiety is caused by the delusion of her independence, the failure to acknowledge that the god is internal to her. Cut free of Christianity, argues May in Nietzsche's voice, immortality is not lost for soul; Ariadne is still supremely valuable, sought, because needed, by the god.

This is a deep and erudite book, worthy of a leisurely read by professional philosophers. Few will find its views correct, or easy to endorse, but most will find their automatic allegiance to public knowledge and the community of the believers-and-scholars challenged.

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Robert W. Burch and Herman J. Saatkamp, editors. *Frontiers in American Philosophy*. Vol. I. College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 1992. Pp. xx + 366. Cloth, \$49.50.

Based upon a major symposium at Texas A & M University in June, 1988, the publication of this first of a promised two volumes of proceedings is characterized by co-editor Herman Saatkamp as both a retrospective on "the origins and plurality of the American intellectual heritage" and as a prospective "through the major developments presently shaping future philosophical inquiry in the United States" (ix). Groupings of essays move from "Whitehead and Mead" to "Technology and the Public Good," to separate sections on "Mead" (again), "Royce: Hermeneutics, Loyalty, and Religion," and "Peirce: Unexplored Issues." A broad and fairly representative sampling of American philosophers is encompassed in these pages: from mainstream figures like Hilary Putnam, Joseph Margolis, and Nicholas Rescher; encompassing distinguished mainstays in the "American Philosophy" establishment, like John Lachs, Beth Singer, Donald Sherburne, and Charlene Seigfried; through elder statesmen and dons like H. S. Thayer and the late Irwin Lieb; to a new generation of American philosophers represented by Kathleen Wallace and Vincent Colapietro.

This is an unusual anthology, and may reveal even more about the current state of